

Ramsar Information Sheet

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- 1. Date this sheet was completed:** October 1997
- 2. Country:** People's Republic of China
- 3. Name of wetland:** Qinghai Bird Island National Nature Reserve (Niao Dao)
- 4. Geographical co-ordinates:** 36°28 - 38°25'N 97°53 - 101°13'E
- 5. Altitude:** 3185 - 3250 m
- 6. Area:** 53,600 ha

7. Overview

Qinghai Lake is a large closed saltwater lake surrounded by mountains. The nature reserve is made up of several islands in the lake, which is encircled by large areas of swamp and marshland

- 8. Wetland type:** Q Sp Ss
- 9. Ramsar Criteria:** 1a, 1d, 2a, 3a, 3c
- 10. Map of site included:** Yes

11. Name and address of compiler:

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12. Justification of criteria selected under point 9:

1a: the largest light saltwater lake at the western plateau in China;
1d: unusual in the eco-geophysical region in China;
2a: the habitat of Black-necked Crane (*Grus nigricollis*) and Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*);
3a: over 100,000 waterbirds;
3c: over 5,000 Common Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) and 1,500 Whooper Swan (*Cygnus cygnus*).

13. General location:

It is located in Qinghai Province, 280 km west of Xining City.

14. Physical features:

Qinghai Lake is 104 km long from east to west and 60 km wide from north to south. The headwaters of the lake come mainly from 40 big and small rivers surrounding the lake, besides groundwater permeated from surrounding mountains. The nature reserve is made up of 6 small islands, big and small springs and swamps. The lake is 27 meters deep. The reserve falls under the category of semi-arid alpine continental climate, with over 3,000 hours of annual sunshine time and an average annual temperature of 0.3 - 1.1°C, with the extreme highest temperature reaching 25°C and the extreme lowest temperature -31°C and an annual precipitation of 360 - 410 mm.

15. Hydrological values:

Qinghai Lake is the largest saltwater lake in China. Its emergence and development boast significant ecological and hydrological value in the study of ecosystems of saltwater lakes.

16. Ecological features:

The lake is surrounded by grasslands, swamp meadow, alpine meadow and semi-desert steppe. There is some algae in the lake. Alpine grass dominates swamp meadow surrounding the lake.

17. Noteworthy flora:

There are over 20 varieties of wetland plants in the lake. Dwarf artemisia dominates swamp meadow surrounding the lake.

18. Noteworthy fauna:

There are 164 kinds of birds on record in the reserve. The major four big birds include Brown-headed Gull (*Larus brunnicephalus*), Great Black-headed Gull (*Larus ichthyaetus*), Bar-headed Goose (*Anser indicus*) and Common Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*). The reserve is also a channel for migration of birds.

Each year a large number of waterfowl perch on and breed there. There are 14 species of mammals in the reserve. A major fish species is Qinghai carp. Major amphibians include *Altirana* and *Bufo tibetanus zarevski*. There are 27 species under 27 genera of zooplankton.

19. Social and cultural values:

Qinghai Lake is a major fishing base in Qinghai Province. The abundant waterfowl and birds attract large numbers of people.

20. Land tenure/ownership of:

- (a) site: state ownership;
- (b) surrounding area: state and collective ownership.

21. Current land use/principal human activities:

- (a) site: nature conservation, scientific research, tourism, fishing, grazing;
- (b) surrounding area: fishing, grazing, tourism, religious activities.

22. Factors adversely affecting the site's ecological character, including changes in land use and development projects:

- (a) site: overgrazing in the meadow.
- (b) surrounding area: overgrazing and extension of farmland.

23. Conservation measures taken:

A reserve covering 7,850 hm² of land was set up in 1975. Since then the area of the reserve has been further enlarged, and an administrative office and an administrative station established for patrol and check during the birds' breeding period. Training courses on love and protection of birds have been conducted in an attempt to enhance conservation awareness of local people. Publicity on protection of waterfowl and environment has been undertaken in an organisational way for tourists. An 11,000 m wire fence and a bird showroom have been set up in a bid to enhance waterfowl protection.

24. Conservation measures proposed but not yet implemented:

The grazing activities of local people in the reserve will be restricted and tourism administration enhanced in an effort to prevent damage to the breeding habitat of birds and land desertification.

25. Current scientific and research facilities:

Artificial incubation of Bar-headed Goose (*Anser indicus*) and study on the utilisation of discarded eggs; bird banding etc., the establishment of laboratories for bird raising.

26. Current conservation education:

Publicity on love and protection of birds has been undertaken in an organisational way for tourists. Newspapers and brochures are distributed among tourists.

27. Current recreation and tourism:

A tourist spot for ornamental birds has been established for eco-tourism, with facilities such as birds' showrooms available.

28. Jurisdiction:

Department of Forestry, Qinghai Province.

29. Management authority:

Administrative Office for Qinghai Lake Bird Island National Nature Reserve.

30. Bibliographical references:

None available.